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March 8, 2012

Good Morning Chairs and Members of the Housing Committee. My name is Wilbur Cooper and I live in Hartford, CT. I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 94, the bill which proposes language which would extend protection from eviction to people with mental health disabilities as well as people who are physically disabled.

I live with post-traumatic stress disorder and would like to stress the importance of being able to maintain my housing. Right now, my housing is much more expensive than I can afford. I have worked hard to move from a point of being homeless to stable housing. There are many people who struggle to maintain their housing. I am not alone in this. I hope that my testimony will help us as a whole, not just as me as an individual. I want to stress the importance of what it means to us to have this housing protection. I speak not only for myself but for the whole community.

Rather than speaking just to a specific geographical area, I want to stress the importance of including all of those who struggle with both housing and mental disabilities. We have case managers, therapists, doctors, who work with us each day. But none of these can provide assistance that this law would. Without this protection, if I were faced with eviction, I would not have a leg to stand on.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify here today and I hope that my words will encourage you to be supportive to the needs of the less fortunate in Connecticut.

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